VIReC RESEARCHERS' GUIDE TO VA DATA

Data Issues Brief	October 2004

1. Closeout of FY2004 Medical SAS Datasets

VHA National Data Systems has announced October 25, 2004, as the *expected* date for closeout of FY2004 National Patient Care Database, from which the Medical SAS Datasets are created. See the notice in the NPCD Audit Trail of Changes on the VA Intranet at http://vaww.aac.va.gov/npcd/new/AuditTrailView.php.

2. Data Quality Issues Related to Period of Service (POS) Variable

Researchers using the variable Period of Service (POS) in the Medical SAS Datasets should review the "Period of Service (POS) Notes" issued by VHA National Data Systems. The Notes discuss potential data consistency problems with the POS variable and how some problems will be resolved. See the VA Intranet, http://vaww.va.gov/nds/AACInfoSystems/NPCPOSNotes.asp.

3. VA Medicare Data for Research Available for 2002

VIReC is announcing that it now has received, validated, and prepared 2002 VA Medicare data. Questions and requests should be addressed to virec_medicare@med.va.gov or Linda Kok at 708-202-2413.

4. VHA Office of Information Project Will Improve Data on Date of Death

The VHA Office of Information's Health Systems Design and Development is on schedule with its project "Date of Death Enhancement." The project will synchronize Date of Death data between the Health Eligibility Center and VistA, addressing multiple bugs in the current software. The project is scheduled for completion February 17, 2005. See the project notebook on the VHA Intranet at http://tspr.vista.med.va.gov/warboard/anotebk.asp?proj=927&Type=Active.

5. New Email Addresses for VIReC, VIReC Help Desk, and Staff Members

The VA Information Resource Center and its staff members, along with the Midwest Center for Health Services Policy and Research and the Hines Cooperative Studies Coordinating Center, have new addresses in the VA Exchange email system. VIReC is listed in the VA Exchange phonebook as "VA Information Resource Center" with the address virec@med.va.gov. That is also the address for the VIReC Help Desk. VIReC staff members are in the VA Exchange phonebook with addresses ending "@med.va.gov."